

Sample A

Thanks for Listening

Strong lead?
Strong
conclusion?
Good title?

I suppose almost everyone is influenced by his or her father—whether for good or bad. In my case, the influence has been a good one, and it’s mostly for a small reason many people might overlook. My dad is the best listener I have ever known or seen.

Dad chose his profession, behavioral psychology, in order to help people. Lots of people have lofty goals like this, but I think it takes a listener to turn those goals into reality. Dad helps couples find ways to talk civilly to each other because they learn to hear not just words, but the hurt or frustration behind them. He helps teenagers build self-confidence by finding listeners in their own lives—a friend, sibling, or someone who will give you a minute of undivided attention. Occasionally, he guides someone into a new career because they learn to listen to their *own* internal voice—and they discover that their occupational choices are actually in conflict with their own goals, and produce stress. “A lot of headaches,” Dad always says, “come from not listening to yourself.”

My dad typically works 60 to 70 hours a week, but still makes time for his family. I see how tired he is, yet he’ll plan a hike—or just a backyard barbecue. If I need to talk, he’ll stop what he’s doing, pull up a chair, and lean in, like he really cares what I have to say. He doesn’t interrupt—as I see many other parents do. He thinks about what *I’ve* said before *he* speaks.

I have no idea, as yet, whether I will be a behavioral psychologist. Dad says I should take my time making this decision, and I will. I know one thing, though: I will be a good listener.

Sample B

My Most Memorable Experience

The most memorable experience I have had was when our family took a trip to Australia and we had a chance to go snorkeling on the Great Barrier Reef.

In case you do not know, the Great Barrier Reef is the largest living thing on the planet. It is made up mostly of coral, which is an animal (as I learned from our guide) and is alive, even though it does not move. Coral larvae attach themselves to something, such as a rock, sunken ship, or other coral, and the colony grows and grows. In the case of the Great Barrier Reef, the ocean temperatures and sunlight have provided the right conditions for the reef to grow to its amazing size—more than 1600 miles long. It did not look the way I expected. I thought every part of it would be under water, but actually, there are over 900 islands, so when you sail through it, it is like entering another world.

The water is extremely clear—which our guide explained is important so that the coral algae get the light they need to make food. They are the first link in the food chain. We could see octopuses, thousands of clown fish and yellow tang, small sharks, starfish, and some jellyfish. Some creatures are dangerous, and our guide told us what to watch out for. She also told us not to step on the coral. It looks hard and tough, but it is really fragile.

We had an amazing time, and I will never forget my trip to the Great Barrier Reef. Everyone should get to see this great work of nature.



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Strong lead?
Strong
conclusion?
Good title?

Revision of Sample B

Trip to Another World

~~My Most Memorable Experience~~

~~The most memorable experience I have had was when our family took a trip to Australia and we had a chance to go snorkeling on the Great Barrier Reef.~~
 Imagine floating through clouds of clown fish, or going nose to nose with a small shark. That's what it's like to snorkel the Great Barrier Reef, just off Australia's coast.

In case you do not know, the Great Barrier Reef is the largest living thing on the planet. It is made up mostly of coral, which is an animal (as I learned from our guide) and is alive, even though it does not move. Coral larvae attach themselves to something, such as a rock, sunken ship, or other coral, and the colony grows and grows. In the case of the Great Barrier Reef, the ocean temperatures and sunlight have provided ^{ideal}~~the right~~ conditions for the reef to grow to its ^{impressive}~~amazing~~ size—more than 1600 miles long. It did not look the way I expected. I thought every part of it would be under water, but actually, there are over 900 islands, so when you sail through it, it is like entering another world.

The water is extremely clear—which our guide explained is important so that the coral algae get the light they need to make food. They are the first link in the food chain. We could see octopuses, thousands of clown fish and yellow tang, small sharks, starfish, and some jellyfish. Some creatures are dangerous, and our guide told us what to watch out for. She also told us not to step on the coral. It looks ^{indestructible,}~~hard and tough~~ but it is really fragile.

~~We had an amazing time, and I will never forget my trip to the Great Barrier Reef. Everyone should get to see this great work of nature.~~ Since that trip I've often wondered if the Great Barrier Reef is a place my grandchildren will be able to visit on one of their "most memorable adventures."

Sample C: Whole Class Revision

A Great Invention

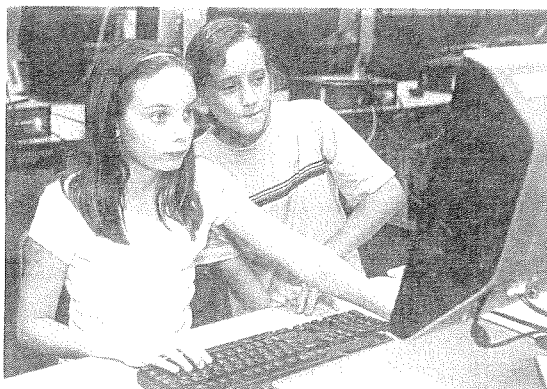
What is the greatest invention of all time? Good question!

Some people might think of penicillin, or even the lightbulb. Wrong!

The greatest invention of all time, by far, is the computer. Just think about it.

Computers allow us almost instant access to information that we would once have had to spend hundreds of research hours to get. In addition, computers are the best record keepers in history. On one small disk you can keep enough data to fill a whole room with the old-fashioned record keeping systems. To say computers have changed communication is an understatement. We use them to do research, talk to each other, and hold virtual meetings with people located at all different parts of the globe. If you had told people two hundred years ago that they could buy European or Chinese goods with a keystroke, they would have thought you were insane. Yesterday's insanity is today's common occurrence.

Of all the many amazing and wonderful inventions people have come up with, nothing surpasses the computer.



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Sample D: Revising with Partners

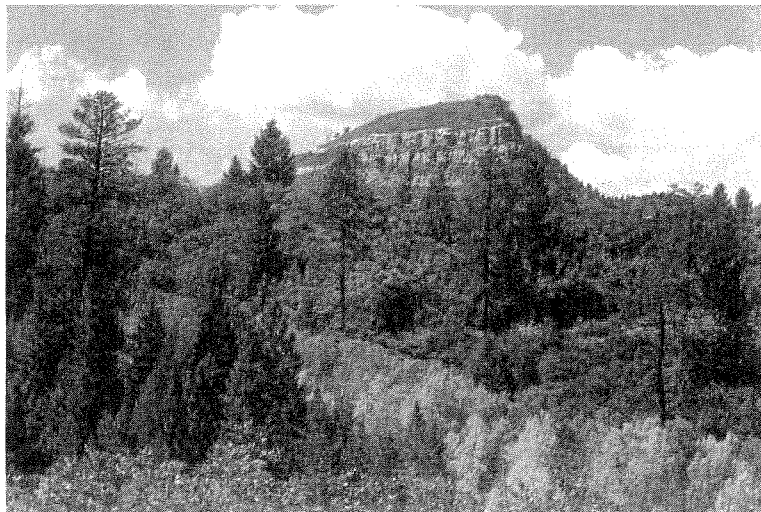
Strong lead?
Strong
conclusion?
Good title?

My Favorite Place

So many places are special to me that it is hard to focus on just one. I love New York City with its bustling sidewalks and Broadway charm. I love my grandmother's house, with its old creaky stairs and attic full of treasures. But for me, nothing is as special as "home," and my "home" has always been outdoors, in the wilderness.

I'm not very tolerant of noise. It gives me headaches and creates tension. I suspect others feel this way, too. I like the softer sounds of nature: Canada geese flying overhead, water running over rocks, frogs and crickets chirping in the moments before darkness falls. Nothing beats a vast expanse of star-covered sky for a view. No feather bed compares to the comfort of a good sleeping bag stretched over soft earth.

The wilderness is my home. It's also my favorite place to be.



Suggested Revisions of C and D

Sample C: Whole Class Revision

Try Living Without One ~~A Great Invention~~

What is the greatest invention of all time? ~~Good question! Some people~~
~~might think of penicillin, or even the lightbulb. Wrong! The greatest~~

To answer that question, think of the things you'd least like to live without, and list them in order. Chances are, computers would be right at the top of that list.

~~invention of all time, by far, is the computer.~~ Just think about it.

Computers allow us almost instant access to information that we
would once have had to spend hundreds of research hours to ~~get~~ *uncover*.
In *most accurate and thorough* addition, computers are the ~~best~~ record keepers in history. On one small
disk you can keep enough data to fill a whole room with the old-
fashioned record keeping systems. To say computers have ~~changed~~ *revolutionized*
communication is an understatement. We use them to do research, talk
to each other, and hold virtual meetings with people located at all
different parts of the globe. If you had told people two hundred years
ago that they could buy European or Chinese goods with a keystroke,
they would have thought you were insane. Yesterday's insanity is today's
common occurrence.

~~Of all the many amazing and wonderful inventions people have~~
~~come up with, nothing surpasses the computer.~~ *The toothbrush, the*
light bulb, the television, the camera—and the computer: Try
going without all of them, and see which one you reach for first.

Sample D: Revising with Partners

Home Is Where the Sleeping Bag Is

~~My Favorite Place~~

~~So many places are special to me that it is hard to focus on just one.~~
 recall loving

I ~~love~~ New York City with its bustling sidewalks and Broadway charm.

recall hours spent exploring

I ~~love~~ my grandmother's house, with its old creaky stairs and attic full of

~~"home" is the place that calls you back,~~
 treasures. But ~~for me, nothing is as special as "home," and my "home,"~~
 and I am always called back to
~~has always been outdoors, in~~ the wilderness.

I'm not very tolerant of noise. It gives me headaches and creates

agree.

tension. I suspect others ~~feel this way, too.~~ I like the softer sounds of

nature: Canada geese flying overhead, water ~~running~~ bubbling over rocks, frogs

and crickets chirping in the moments before darkness falls. Nothing

star-strewn

beats a ~~vast expanse of star-covered~~ sky for a view. No feather bed

compares to the ~~comfort~~ body hugging luxury of a good sleeping bag stretched over ~~soft~~ pine-needle upholstered earth.

~~The wilderness is my home. It's also my favorite place to be.~~

In the revised edition of *Hatchet*, author Gary Paulsen says he thinks and feels better when he can "slip into the trees and disappear from the rest of the world." I think that sums it up.

Author's Note: The quotation is from Gary Paulsen, *Hatchet*. 2007. New York: Simon and Schuster, p. 64.